

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-171. (cancelled).

172. (currently amended) A method for making a transcription product having a sequence corresponding to a target sequence in a target nucleic acid in a sample, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) obtaining an RNA polymerase that can transcribe RNA using a single-stranded promoter, wherein said RNA polymerase is an N4 mini-vRNAP or the Y678F mutant of said mini-vRNAP;
- (b) obtaining single-stranded DNA comprising the target sequence that is present in or complementary to a sequence in the target nucleic acid in the sample;
- (c) operably joining to the single-stranded DNA a single-stranded polynucleotide comprising a promoter that binds the RNA polymerase, thereby obtaining a single-stranded transcription substrate;
- (d) obtaining nucleoside triphosphates (NTPs) that are substrates for the RNA polymerase and that are complementary to canonical nucleic acid bases;
- (e) admixing the RNA polymerase, the single-stranded transcription substrate and the NTPs; and
- (f) incubating the RNA polymerase, the single-stranded transcription substrate and the NTPs to synthesize the transcription product.

173. (previously presented) The method of claim 172, the method additionally comprising the steps of:

- (g) obtaining a reverse transcriptase;
- (h) reverse transcribing the transcription product from step (f) to obtain a first-strand cDNA complementary to the transcription product;
- (i) operably joining to the first-strand cDNA a single-stranded polynucleotide comprising a promoter that binds the RNA polymerase, thereby obtaining a second single-stranded transcription substrate;
- (j) admixing the RNA polymerase, the second single-stranded transcription substrate and the NTPs; and

(k) incubating the RNA polymerase, the second single-stranded transcription substrate and the NTPs to synthesize a second transcription product.

174. (previously presented) The method of claim 172, wherein the single-stranded DNA comprising the target sequence is obtained using a target nucleic acid comprising: (a) DNA; (b) at least one mRNA; or (c) substantially all mRNA in a sample.

175. (previously presented) The method of claim 172, wherein the single-stranded transcription substrate of step (c) is obtained by primer extension of the single-stranded DNA of step (b) using a promoter splice template oligo annealed to the 3'-end of the single-stranded DNA as a template, said splice template oligo comprising: (a) a 5'-end portion that is complementary to a desired sequence to be added to the 3'-end of the first-strand cDNA; and (b) a 3'-end portion that is complementary to the 3'-end of the first-strand cDNA, wherein the 3'-terminus is blocked so it cannot be primer extended using a DNA polymerase.

176. (previously presented) The method of claim 175, wherein the 5'-end portion of said splice template oligo is complementary to part of or all of a sense or an anti-sense promoter sequence for an RNA polymerase that can bind a single-stranded promoter.

177. (previously presented) The method of claim 175, wherein the single-stranded DNA is obtained by reverse transcription of a transcription product.

178. (previously presented) The method of claim 175, wherein steps (b) and (c) comprise the sub-steps of:

- (a1) obtaining a primer for synthesis of a first-strand cDNA, the primer comprising a sequence complementary to the sequence at the 3'-end of the target sequence to be transcribed;
- (b1) annealing the primer to the target nucleic acid;
- (c1) primer-extending the primer annealed to the target nucleic acid with a DNA polymerase to obtain a linear first-strand cDNA comprising a sequence complementary to the target sequence;
- (d1) obtaining a promoter splice template oligo comprising:

(i) a 3'-end that is sufficiently homologous to the 3'-end of the linear first-strand cDNA, including the tail if present, to hybridize therewith, and that is blocked so that it cannot itself be primer-extended by a DNA polymerase; and

(ii) a 5'-portion that exhibits a sequence that is complementary to a transcription promoter for an RNA polymerase that can synthesize RNA using a single-stranded transcription substrate;

(e1) annealing the promoter splice template oligo to the linear first-strand cDNA including the tail if present;

(f1) primer-extending the linear first-strand cDNA including the tail, if present, with a DNA polymerase to obtain a promoter-containing linear first-strand cDNA that has a 3'-portion that is complementary to the portion of the promoter splice template oligo that is not hybridizable to the first-strand cDNA including the tail, if present; and

(g1) removing or dissociating the promoter splice template oligo from the promoter-containing linear first-strand cDNA to obtain the single-stranded transcription substrate.

179. (previously presented) The method of claim 178, additionally comprising the steps of:

(a2) obtaining a blocking oligo, the blocking oligo comprising a sequence that anneals to the target nucleic acid so as to delimit the 3'-end of a primer extension product of the primer using the target nucleic acid as a template, wherein the blocking oligo is not displaced by the primer extension product, and wherein the blocking oligo is not itself capable of being primer-extended by a DNA polymerase; and

(b2) annealing the blocking oligo, together with the primer, to the target nucleic acid in step (b1) prior to primer-extending the primer in step (c1).

180. (previously presented) The method of claim 178, wherein the target nucleic acid that is annealed to the linear first-strand cDNA is removed prior to annealing the promoter splice template oligo to the linear first-strand cDNA.

181. (previously presented) The method of claim 178, wherein a tail is added to the 3'-end of the linear first-strand cDNA prior to annealing the promoter splice template oligo to the linear first-strand cDNA.

182. (previously presented) The method of claim 172, wherein steps (b) and (c) comprise the sub-steps of:

- (a) obtaining a target mRNA;
- (b) obtaining a primer for synthesis of a linear first-strand cDNA that is complementary to the mRNA, the primer selected from the group consisting of:
 - (i) an oligo(dT) primer;
 - (ii) an oligo(dT) anchor primer;
 - (iii) a primer that is complementary to a specific sequence at the 3'-end of the mRNA;and
- (iv) a primer in a mixture of primers, the primer comprising a sequence of nucleotides, each of which nucleotides comprises a random nucleotide base that is complementary to any of the four canonical nucleotide bases;
- (c) annealing the primer to the target mRNA;
- (d) primer-extending the primer annealed to the target mRNA with a reverse transcriptase to obtain a linear first-strand cDNA that is complementary to and annealed to the target mRNA;
- (e) obtaining a promoter splice template oligo comprising:
 - (i) a 3'-end that is sufficiently homologous to the 3'-end of the linear first-strand cDNA including the tail, if present, to hybridize therewith, and that is blocked so that it cannot itself be primer-extended by a DNA polymerase; and
 - (ii) a 5'-portion that exhibits a sequence that is complementary to a transcription promoter for an RNA polymerase that can synthesize RNA using a single-stranded transcription substrate;
- (f) annealing the promoter splice template oligo to the linear first-strand cDNA including the tail, if present;
- (g) primer-extending the linear first-strand cDNA including the tail, if present, with a DNA polymerase to obtain a promoter-containing linear first-strand cDNA that has a 3'-portion that is complementary to the portion of the promoter splice template oligo that is not hybridizable to the linear first-strand cDNA including the tail, if present; and
- (h) removing or dissociating the promoter splice template oligo from the promoter-containing linear first-strand cDNA to obtain the single-stranded transcription substrate.

183. (previously presented) The method of claim 182, wherein the target mRNA that is annealed to the linear first-strand cDNA is removed prior to annealing the promoter splice template oligo to the linear first-strand cDNA.

184. (previously presented) The method of claim 182, wherein a tail is added to the 3'-end of the linear first-strand cDNA prior to annealing the promoter splice template oligo to the linear first-strand cDNA.

185. (previously presented) The method of claim 172, wherein the transcription product is used to obtain an additional single-stranded transcription substrate and an additional transcription product comprising a sequence corresponding to the target sequence, the method comprising the sub-steps of:

- (a1) obtaining a primer for synthesis of a first-strand cDNA, the primer exhibiting a sequence that is complementary to the sequence at the 3'-end of the transcription product;
- (b1) annealing the primer to the transcription product;
- (c1) primer-extending the primer annealed to the transcription product with a DNA polymerase to obtain a linear first-strand cDNA that is complementary to and annealed to the transcription product;
- (d1) obtaining a promoter splice template oligo comprising:
 - (i) a 3'-end that is sufficiently homologous to the 3'-end of the linear first-strand cDNA including the tail, if present, to hybridize therewith, and that is blocked so that it cannot itself be primer-extended by a DNA polymerase; and
 - (ii) a 5'-portion that exhibits a sequence that is complementary to a transcription promoter for an RNA polymerase that can synthesize RNA using a single-stranded transcription substrate;
- (e1) annealing the promoter splice template oligo to the linear first-strand cDNA;
- (f1) primer-extending the linear first-strand cDNA with a DNA polymerase to obtain a promoter-containing linear first-strand cDNA that has a 3'-portion that is complementary to the portion of the promoter splice template oligo that is not hybridizable to the linear first-strand cDNA;

- (g1) removing or dissociating the promoter splice template oligo from the promoter-containing linear first-strand cDNA to obtain the additional single-stranded transcription substrate; and
- (h1) contacting the additional single-stranded transcription substrate from step (h) with an RNA polymerase that transcribes the additional single-stranded transcription substrate using the promoter to obtain the additional transcription product.

186. (previously presented) The method of claim 185, wherein the transcription product that is annealed to the linear first-strand cDNA is removed prior to annealing the promoter splice template oligo to the linear first-strand cDNA.

187. (previously presented) The method of claim 172, wherein steps (b) and (c) comprise the sub-steps of:

- (a1) annealing to a single-stranded target nucleic acid a primer complementary to the 3'-end of the single-stranded target sequence;
- (b1) extending the primer by reverse transcription or primer extension with a DNA polymerase so as to obtain a first-strand cDNA that is complementary to the target sequence;
- (c1) annealing a promoter splice template oligo to the 3'-end of the first-strand cDNA, wherein the promoter splice template oligo comprises:
 - (i) a 3'-portion that is hybridizable to the 3'-end of the first-strand cDNA including the tail, if present, and that is blocked so that it cannot itself be primer-extended by a DNA polymerase; and
 - (ii) a 5'-portion exhibiting a sequence that is complementary to a transcription promoter for an RNA polymerase that can synthesize RNA using a single-stranded transcription substrate;
- (d1) extending the first-strand cDNA including the tail, if present, by reverse transcription or primer extension with a DNA polymerase so as to obtain an anti-sense-promoter-containing first-strand cDNA that has a 3'-portion that is complementary to the portion of the promoter splice template oligo that is not hybridizable to the target nucleic acid sequence including the tail, if present;
- (e1) removing or dissociating the target nucleic acid from the anti-sense-promoter-containing

first-strand cDNA;

- (f1) circularizing the anti-sense promoter-containing first-strand cDNA with a ligase;
- (g1) annealing to the circular anti-sense-promoter-containing first-strand cDNA a strand-displacement primer, wherein the strand-displacement primer is complementary to a portion of the anti-sense-promoter-containing first-strand cDNA;
- (h1) incubating the circular anti-sense-promoter-containing first-strand cDNA to which the strand-displacement primer is annealed with a strand-displacing DNA polymerase to obtain a linear promoter-containing second-strand cDNA, wherein the linear promoter-containing second-strand cDNA comprises a single-stranded transcription substrate; and
- (i1) obtaining the single-stranded transcription substrate.

188. (previously presented) The method of claim 187, wherein a blocking oligo that delimits the 5'-end of the target sequence is also annealed to the target nucleic acid together with the primer in step (a1).

189. (previously presented) The method of claim 187, wherein a tail is added to the 3'-end of the linear first-strand cDNA obtained in step (b1) prior to annealing the promoter splice template oligo to the linear first-strand cDNA.

190. (previously presented) The method of claim 172, wherein steps (b) and (c) comprise the sub-steps of:

- (a1) primer extending a sense promoter primer with a DNA polymerase using the target nucleic acid in the sample as a template to obtain the single-stranded DNA comprising the target sequence, which single-stranded DNA comprises linear promoter-containing first-strand cDNA; and
- (b1) circularizing the linear promoter-containing first-strand cDNA with a ligase, thereby operably joining the single-stranded DNA comprising the target sequence to the promoter to obtain a circular single-stranded transcription substrate.

191. (previously presented) The method of claim 190, the method additionally comprising the step of cleaving the circular single-stranded transcription substrate at a site that is 3'-of the

promoter sequence and 5'-of the target sequence to obtain a linear single-stranded transcription substrate.

192. (previously presented) The method of claim 190, wherein the target nucleic acid in the sample comprises RNA such as mRNA, or a transcription product, and the DNA polymerase used for primer extension is an enzyme with reverse transcriptase activity.

193. (previously presented) The method of claim 172, wherein the single-stranded polynucleotide of step (c) is a promoter ligation oligo and the joining is by ligation using a ligation splint.

194. (previously presented) The method of claim 172, wherein the target sequence has a tail sequence comprising at least two or between two to ten nucleotides.

195. (previously presented) The method of claim 172, wherein at least one of the NTPs is a 2'-amino-deoxynucleoside triphosphate such as 2'-amino-dCTP; a 2'-fluoro-deoxynucleoside triphosphate such as a 2'-fluoro-deoxynucleoside triphosphate selected from 2'-fluoro-dCTP and 2'-fluoro-dUTP; or a 2'-azido-deoxynucleoside triphosphate such as 2'-azido-dCTP.

196. (previously presented) The method of claim 172, wherein the target sequence comprises a 3'-portion that encodes a first portion, a 5'-portion that encodes a second portion that is complementary to the first portion, and a middle portion that joins the 3'-portion and the 5'-portion, wherein the middle portion exhibits a sequence that is not complementary to either the 3'-portion or the 5'-portion and wherein the transcription product comprises a hairpin RNA.

197. (previously presented) The method of claim 196, wherein the hairpin RNA has RNA interference activity in a cell that synthesizes a target mRNA comprising the target sequence.

198-205. (cancelled)